

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of facilitating the transfer of intellectual property, the method comprising:

obtaining at a computer system of a first entity information concerning intellectual property in which an interest is available for transfer (the "available

5 intellectual property") from a second entity; and

transferring the interest in the available intellectual property by concluding an agreement between the first and second entities,

wherein the agreement is representative of an acceptance of an offer concerning the transferring of the interest in the available intellectual property and consideration for

10 the transferring of the interest, and

wherein at least a portion of the interest in the available intellectual property that is transferred to the first entity is intended to be transferred from the first entity to a third entity.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the information obtained concerning the available intellectual property relates to the nature of the available intellectual property; and

wherein the method further comprises:

5 processing the information relating to the nature of the available intellectual property, wherein processing includes at least one of manipulating, converting, transforming, analyzing, reviewing, modifying and organizing the information; and

obtaining additional information concerning the interest in the available intellectual property that is available for transfer (the "available interest") after completing the processing.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the processing allows for a determination concerning at least one of the financial value of the available intellectual property, the technological scope of the available intellectual property, the market/product coverage of the available intellectual property, the ownership/possessory status of the available

5 intellectual property, and whether there have been past inquiries received at the computer

system of the first entity concerning the available intellectual property and, if so, the nature of the past inquiries.

4. The method of claim 2, further comprising  
processing the additional information concerning the available interest to  
determine if the available interest is desired for transfer by the first entity;  
generating a proposed agreement for transferring the available interest if the  
5 available interest is determined to be desired for transfer; and  
providing the proposed agreement from the computer system of the first entity to  
another computer system of the second entity, wherein the computer system of the first  
entity is at least one of a computer system owned by the first entity and a server computer  
of an independent entity that is hosting a website for the first entity.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein the concluding of the agreement includes at least  
one of receiving an acceptance at the computer system of the first entity and providing an  
acceptance from the computer system of the first entity, and  
further comprising providing payment upon the concluding of the agreement.
6. The method of claim 4, further comprising  
receiving an objection to the proposed agreement at the computer system, and:  
either responding to the objection by generating a new proposed agreement and  
providing the new proposed agreement from the computer system;  
5 or responding to the objection by providing an acceptance from the computer  
system.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein  
the information obtained concerning the available intellectual property relates to  
the interest in the available intellectual property that is available for transfer.
8. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
receiving an initial contact at the computer system;

providing descriptive information from the computer system concerning the first entity;

- 5 obtaining identification information at the computer system concerning the second entity; and  
providing an identifier for future access.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

recording, on a database within the computer system, information regarding the interest in the available intellectual property that is transferred in accordance with the concluded agreement;

- 5 processing the information recorded on the database so that at least a portion of the processed information can be utilized as descriptive information to be provided from the computer system of the first entity to an IP exchange computer system.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

checking a database of the computer system of the first entity to determine the existence of a relevant past inquiry regarding intellectual property conforming to the available intellectual property that is transferred in accordance with the concluded

- 5 agreement; and

contacting an IP desirer computer system from which the computer system of the first entity received such a relevant past inquiry.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein

either the obtained information concerning the available intellectual property is obtained at the computer system from an IP exchange computer system, and the method further comprises providing a bid after obtaining the information concerning the available  
5 intellectual property;

or the method further comprises providing to the IP exchange computer system information regarding an intellectual property interest and then receiving a bid for the intellectual property interest.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the available intellectual property includes an intellectual property asset selected from among a patent, a trademark, a copyright, a patent application, an invention, and a trade secret; and

the interest in the available intellectual property includes at least one of a license  
5 to a portion of the intellectual property asset, a license to the entire intellectual property asset, complete ownership in the intellectual property asset, and a contingent interest in the available intellectual property that becomes perfected upon the occurrence of a condition.

13. A method of facilitating the transfer of intellectual property, the method comprising:

obtaining at a computer system of a first entity information concerning intellectual property in which a second entity desires to obtain an interest (the "desired  
5 intellectual property");

transferring the interest in the desired intellectual property by concluding an agreement between the first and second entities,

wherein the agreement is representative of an acceptance of an offer concerning the transferring of the interest in the desired intellectual property and consideration for  
10 the transferring of the interest,

wherein at least a portion of the interest in the desired intellectual property that is transferred from the first entity was transferred from a third entity to the first entity.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising:

processing the information obtained concerning the desired intellectual property,

wherein the information obtained concerning the desired intellectual property relates to at least one of the nature of the desired intellectual property and the interest in  
5 the desired intellectual property, and

wherein the information obtained concerning the desired intellectual property is provided directly from the second entity, which is an IP desirer.

15. The method of claim 14,

wherein the information obtained concerning the desired intellectual property relates to the nature of the desired intellectual property, and the processing of the information includes a determination of whether there is any intellectual property  
5 available to the first entity that conforms to the nature of the desired intellectual property;  
and

wherein the processing includes at least one of:

checking a database of the computer system having information concerning intellectual property that is available to the first entity because it is at least in part  
10 possessed by the first entity;

checking a database of past inquiries to the computer system from IP owners concerning intellectual property that may be transferable from the IP owners to the first entity; and

providing a search request to an IP exchange computer system concerning  
15 intellectual property that is potentially transferable from IP owners via the IP exchange computer system.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the processing includes the checking of the database of past inquiries, and further comprising:

contacting an IP owner computer system to arrange for a transfer of an interest in intellectual property conforming to the nature of the desired intellectual property when  
5 the database of past inquiries indicates that an inquiry was received, from the IP owner corresponding to the IP owner computer system, concerning intellectual property conforming to the nature of the desired intellectual property.

17. The method of claim 13, wherein:

either the obtained information concerning the desired intellectual property is obtained at the computer system from an IP exchange computer system, and the method further comprises providing information concerning an intellectual property interest in  
5 response to the obtained information, and then receiving a bid for the intellectual property interest;

or the method further comprises providing, from the computer system to the IP exchange computer system, information regarding intellectual property in which an interest is desired by the first entity, receiving information concerning such intellectual property, and providing a bid to the IP exchange computer system.

18. A system for facilitating the transfer of intellectual property, the system comprising:

an intellectual property investment bank ("IPIB") computer system having a processor coupled to a memory, a user interface and at least one input/output device,

wherein the IPIB computer system is linked to and capable of communicating with at least one of an IP owner computer system, an IP desirer computer system, and an IP exchange computer system,

wherein the IPIB computer system is capable of receiving information concerning at least one of intellectual property that is available for transfer (the "available intellectual property") from an IP owner to an IPIB and intellectual property that is desired for transfer from the IPIB to an IP desirer (the "desired intellectual property"), and

wherein the IPIB computer system is capable of at least one of receiving or providing a signal indicating an acceptance of an offer concerning a transfer of the at least one of the available intellectual property and the desired intellectual property.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein

either the IPIB computer system includes a web server including a database and capable of hosting an IPIB website,

or the IPIB computer system is linked to and capable of communicating with a web server that hosts the IPIB website;

wherein the web server is linked to and capable of communication with the at least one of the IP owner computer system, the IP desirer computer system, and the IP exchange computer system via the internet, and the IPIB website can be accessed through the use of a browser and includes at least one user interface; and

wherein the memory includes at least one of information regarding intellectual property of an IPIB, information regarding past inquiries from IP owners, information

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15 regarding past inquiries from IP desirers, information regarding proposed agreements and the generation of proposed agreements, information regarding the valuation of intellectual property, information regarding whether to at least one of accept and object to a proposed agreement, information regarding whether to at least one of accept and object to a bid, information regarding the operation and layout of the IPIB website, and information regarding identification of at least one of an IP owner and an IP desirer.

20. The system of claim 18, wherein the IPIB computer system includes a server computer that provides a graphical user interface (GUI) comprising input controls, wherein the input controls include a set of menu items including at least one of a field for inputting identification information, a field for inputting information concerning the desired or available intellectual property, a field for inputting information concerning a particular interest in the desired or available intellectual property, a prompt for inputting information concerning the desired or available intellectual property, a prompt for inputting information concerning the particular interest in the desired or available intellectual property, and a field for inputting at least one of a proposed agreement and an objection, and a selection item for inputting an acceptance.

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